

Facts and Worksheets for Module 1 of Working With Dogs

Canine Communication Facts

Dog domestication began approximately 15,000 years ago. During the process, humans were able to choose desirable traits, including the length of the legs and coat colour.

Source: Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Studies show that dogs can identify the emotions of humans, due to changes in their facial expressions.

Source: Dailymail.co.uk

Worksheet for Topic 1: An Overview of Canine Communication

It is time to test what you have learned, by way of this worksheet. Set 30 minutes aside, to cover all three activities that have been set. There is also a convenient feedback and advice section, to enable you to check what you have written, at the end of each activity.

Activity 1: Dogs verbally communicate, in a variety of ways. Discuss what dogs are trying to verbalise, when they whine, growl and bark (allow 10 minutes).

Advice and Feedback

This module only briefly touches on what dogs mean when they bark, growl and whine. However, what was discussed here is a good basis for how dogs attempt to communicate, not only with each other, but also with humans. Though a dog may have many reasons for barking, for instance, including just to hear their own voice, there are some valid reasons for them to use these vocalisations. Think about what these might be and explain them above. Remember, some of these vocalisations might have very opposite meanings, so one must also pay attention to body language.

Activity 2: Discuss in the space below, the four main reasons that dogs are able to understand the communication signals from humans (allow 10 minutes).

Advice and Feedback

Humans and dogs have complex social lives - and each species has developed complicated systems, for communication. Though we take for granted that we can do this, dogs can do this too, thanks to the thousands of years that the species has relied on their human companions.

This module covered the four main reasons for this, so think back to what you learned. Keep in mind that this is all related to the way dogs react to specific human gestures, such as pointing.

Activity 3: Domestic dogs are excellent problem solvers, but wild dogs, such as dingoes, often outperform domestic dogs when compared head to head. Explain why this occurs: (allow 10 minutes)

Advice and Feedback

Domestic dogs and wild dogs might look similar, but they have evolved very differently. Due to this, they react differently in different situations, such as when interacting with humans. You might also discover that because of this, dogs rely on their human companions much more than other domestic animals might.

Canine Socialisation Facts

Approximately one in every four to five dogs have behavioural issues, due to poor socialisation.

Source: Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors

About 80% of dogs in the UK have at least one fear - and most of these fears are due to poor socialisation.

Source: People's Dispensary for Sick Animals

Worksheet for Topic 2: How Dogs Socialise and Speak

It is time to test what you have learned, by way of this worksheet. Set 30 minutes aside, to cover all three activities that have been set. There is also a convenient feedback and advice section, to enable you to check what you have written, at the end of each activity.

Activity 1: Socialisation for puppies is extremely important, within the first few months of life. Discuss the different ways that one can socialise a puppy (allow 10 minutes).

Advice and Feedback

There are a number of ways that a puppy can be socialised. Some of this occurs in the new home and other methods of socialisation require taking the puppy to new areas, or to experience new things.

Activity 2: To fully understand the communications of a dog, one must look at the dogs total body stance. Write down descriptions of three common stances that a dog will take and the feeling that this stance portrays (allow 10 minutes).

Advice and Feedback

When a dog is communicating its feelings, one can look at its ears, face, mouth, legs, tail and back, in order to see what actions he or she is exhibiting. All of these things, as a whole, can give us a clue about whether the dog is aggressive, on alert, friendly, or even frightened.

Activity 3: Dogs have many ways that they use verbal communication. These include barking, growling, howling and whining. Write down what different barks, growls, howls and whines might indicate (allow 10 minutes).

Advice and Feedback

Domestic canines make a variety of sounds and each sound might have a different tone, volume and meaning. Some might believe a whine is always sad, or a growl is always angry. This, however, is not always the case.

Canine Breed Facts

Research shows that dogs with short or absent tails are twice as likely to have aggressive encounters, than dogs with longer and, hence, more visible, tails.

Source: Psychology Today

The most popular dog breed in the UK is the Labrador Retriever. It is followed by mixed breeds, Jack Russels, Border Collies and German Shepherds.

Source: Standard.co.uk

Worksheet for Topic 3: Differences in Breed

It is time to test what you have learned, by way of this worksheet. Set 30 minutes aside, in order to cover all three activities that have been set. There is a convenient feedback and advice section for you to check what you have written, at the end of each activity.

Activity 1: Barking and howling are two ways that dogs communicate with each other and with humans. Explain how barking and howling can be affected by the breed of the dog (allow 10 minutes).

Advice and Feedback

Barking and howling are always affected by the breed of the dog, especially when you take into account the size of the dog and whether or not the breed is known to be a barker, or a howler. On the other hand, some dog breeds are well known for being quite quiet - and there is even a breed which doesn't bark at all.

Activity 2: Explain how dog breeds began to develop, in the Victorian era (allow 10 minutes).

Advice and Feedback

Before the Victorians, most dogs were viewed and sought after, based on their abilities, not their looks. When the middle class Victorians began to realise that some breeds were status symbols, more focus on the breed itself was made.

Activity 3: There are a number of research studies that look at dogs, breeds and how they communicate with each other and with humans. Explain what the studies mentioned in this module found about how breed can affect communication (allow 10 minutes).

Advice and Feedback

Both mixed breed and purebred dogs have been extensively studied by researchers, when it comes to both communication and memory. The tests were designed for the dogs and their owners and often used food, as a way to motivate the dogs to perform in the test. What was found with this research?

Much of this module should have proven to be fairly straightforward and self-explanatory. However, if you do not feel you have taken in all of the relevant information covered in this module, or you have not been able to complete this worksheet, find the time to run through the module again.